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SUBJECT: SERBIA HOPES FOR REWARDS AFTER ICTY PROSECUTOR VISIT

REFS: A) BELGRADE 357, B) BELGRADE 577, C) BELGRADE 773

Summary  
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¶1. (SBU) Serbian officials said they were pleased with the September 10-11 visit to Belgrade of Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Serge Brammertz. They said they were confident they had demonstrated Serbia's willingness to capture the remaining two fugitives. Some officials said they expected progress on the EU Interim Trade Agreement as a result of Brammertz's feedback to the EU. Brammertz said publicly that he was pleased with the tone of the meetings and was cautiously optimistic that Mladic and Hadzic would be captured soon. Positive actions from the EU at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) on September 15 would encourage the government to fulfill this commitment. End Summary.

Prosecutor Meets New Government  
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¶2. (U) ICTY Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz visited Belgrade September 10-11 to discuss Serbia's cooperation with the ICTY. This was Brammertz's first meeting with the new government. He met with President Tadic, Prime Minister Cvetkovic, Justice Minister Snezana Malovic, Interior Minister Ivica Dacic, new Security Information Agency head Sasa Vukadinovic, ICTY Coordination Council Chief Rasim Ljajic, war crimes prosecutor Vladimir Vukcevic, and members of the action team responsible for locating the remaining two fugitives, Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic.

Serbian Government Pleased and Hopeful  
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¶3. (SBU) Director of the Serbian government's ICTY Coordination Council Dusan Ignjatovic told us on September 12 that Serbian officials felt the meetings had been good. In public statements well-covered by the press, Serbian officials said the meetings had demonstrated Serbia's will to cooperate fully with the ICTY. In a press conference on September 10, Ljajic said the government realized the job would not be finished until Mladic and Hadzic had been captured and turned over to The Hague. President Tadic issued a statement on September 11 that the government was committed to delivering the remaining two fugitives because it was in the interests of justice and reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia. Tadic added he hoped the prosecutor would consider the fact that Serbia had already delivered 44 indictees to the Court. Prime Minister Cvetkovic and Justice Minister Malovic each echoed those sentiments in their own public statements.

¶4. (U) Serbian officials implied they expected Brammertz's statements to influence the September 15 EU Council of Ministers discussion of the Interim Trade Agreement with Serbia. Both Ljajic and Dacic stated publicly that they expected the EU Council of Ministers to move forward on the trade agreement.

15. (U) Some officials made the point in their public statements that the ICTY had to show its impartiality to improve its image in Serbia. Cvetkovic said the result of the prosecutor's appeal of the not guilty verdict of Ramush Haradinaj (ref A) was important to improving the image of the Tribunal in Serbia. Dacic said it was essential for the Tribunal to treat all cases equally, regardless of the nationality of the defendant and for the Tribunal to respect the rights of defendants.

Brammertz Cautiously Optimistic  
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16. (SBU) In statements to the media on September 10 and September 11, Brammertz congratulated the Serbian government on the arrests of Stojan Zupljanin and Radovan Karadzic (refs B and C). He applauded the dedication of the action team, said the capture of Mladic and Hadzic was the key to full cooperation with the Tribunal, and said he was cautiously optimistic that the search would be successful because the new government was committed to full cooperation. ICTY Belgrade office head Deyan Mihov told us on September 12 that the meetings had been very constructive from ICTY's perspective. He said Serbian officials had shown progress and demonstrated there was a good environment for ICTY cooperation, even if Serbia had not achieved full results. Mihov told us that while Brammertz did not plan to present an early report to the UN Security Council, nor had he been invited to speak officially in Brussels at the Council of Ministers on September 15, the EU was unofficially noting Brammertz's statements. (The French Embassy has also confirmed to us that France, in its EU presidency capacity, would seek Brammertz's assessment in advance of the GAERC.)

Comment  
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17. (SBU) Serbia's new government is hoping for a carrot in exchange for the political risk it took in capturing Karadzic in July. Government leaders are looking for proof that ICTY cooperation will deliver Serbian integration into the EU. Without some positive sign at the GAERC, the new government will have a harder time making this connection. End Comment.

MUNTER